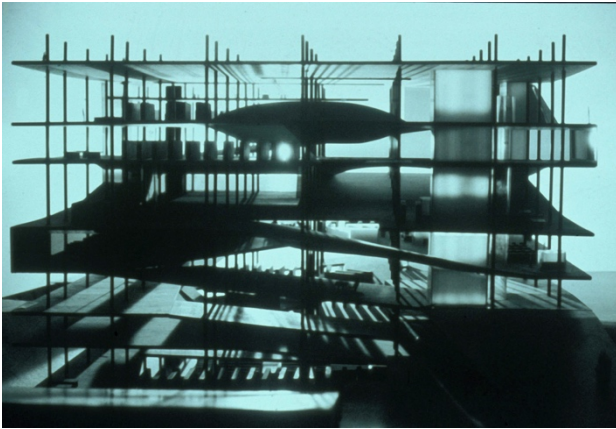


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A4002_003: Core II Architecture Studio
Columbia University GSAPP
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Mentor: Lihan Jin

Conceptual Architecture



OMA / Rem Koolhaas
Two libraries at Jussieu, Paris (1992)



Mansilla + Tuñón Architects
Castilla and León Museum of Contemporary Art, Spain (2001-2004)

Though the term “concept” is profusely used in architecture, architectural concepts are very hard to come by. Different from a strategy, a composition, a *parti*, or a collage, a concept is distinct by virtue of its specificities while its degree of abstraction makes a design outcome, on some fundamental level, generalizable. In setting certain projects apart from what would otherwise be merely the product of compositional strategies, the effect of a concept is twofold.

- First, it facilitates the access of design work to the plane of discourse, since, even when graphically represented—typically through a diagram—a concept is still primarily an intellectual construct. Once on that plane, the project in question is capable of being discussed and further developed through a host of appropriate discursive figures: premises, judgments, inferences, ideas, conclusions, etc., as channeled through thought and expressed through language.
- Second, concepts in architecture tend to catalyze the kind of singularity that paves the way for making significant contributions to the domain of architectural thinking. This singularity sets apart the make-up of a project and is usually the result of a series of patterns, underlying rules, or design gestures that are clearly codifiable.

This studio will undertake a conceptual approach to architectural thinking on the grounds that such an approach, as understood here, will be especially effective for finding alternatives to received modes of spatial organization in architecture.

As a particular heuristic device toward conceptual architecture, the section will focus on the notion of *spatial infrastructure*. Spatial infrastructure refers here to the ensemble of three-dimensional material elements providing a building's primary articulation of space, prior to the introduction of partitions. The school happens to be a very flexible programmatic package. Countless of different spatial typologies have proven appropriate to holding a school. It therefore lends itself to be explored through the notion of spatial infrastructure (one that rejects any identity between spatial typology and program) in especially productive ways. Moreover, in preceding programmatic specialization, spatial infrastructure taps into the increasing necessity for buildings to accommodate change over time—while resisting any compromise on architectural qualities in the name of “flexibility.”

Some of the propositions allowing us to produce architectural concepts via spatial infrastructure include the following:

1. Programmatic Immanence
2. Purposeful Equilibrium between Order and Differentiation: Toward Three-Dimensional Field Conditions
3. Beyond Separation between Floors
4. From Architecture vs. Engineering to *Architecture-Engineering Hybrid*
5. Distinctive Spatial Qualities
6. From Concealment to Integration of Services

In addition to concepts, this section will emphasize materiality as a realm of design central to an architect's sensibility.